VIA EMAIL

February 22, 2021

California Senate Governance and Finance Committee
California State Capital
Room # 408
Sacramento CA 95814

Members: Hon. Mark McGuire, Chair, Hon. Jim Nielsen, Vice Chair, Hon. Robert Hertzberg, Hon. Maria Elena Durazo, Hon. Scott Weiner

cc: Jonathan Peterson

SB 274 – {SUPPORT}

Oakland Privacy is pleased to support Senate Bill 274, which would require a legislative body to email a link to, or a copy of all the documents constituting an agenda packet if so requested.

Oakland Privacy is a citizen's coalition that works regionally to defend the right to privacy, enhance public transparency, and increase oversight of law enforcement, particularly regarding the use of surveillance techniques and equipment. We were instrumental in the creation of the first standing municipal citizens' privacy advisory commission in the City of Oakland, and we have engaged in privacy enhancing legislative efforts with several Northern California cities and regional entities. As experts on municipal privacy reform, we have written use policies and impact reports for a variety of surveillance technologies, conducted research and investigations, and developed frameworks for the implementation of equipment with respect for civil rights, privacy protections and community control.

As governmental transparency advocates and sponsors of a significant amount of local legislation that is focused on governmental oversight and community accountability, we can report that Senate Bill 274 would be a great help to groups like ourselves which engage in multi-jurisdictional advocacy.

Oakland Privacy's primary focus is local oversight laws that defend privacy rights in the face of growing surveillance activities. In order to pursue the passage of local laws and ordinances and to speak up on behalf of the right to privacy when privacy-challenging initiatives are brought forward in jurisdictions throughout Northern California, we regularly *attempt* to monitor publicly noticed meeting agendas for over two dozen local government agencies in our service region, including city councils, county boards of supervisors and regional transit agencies. This is a huge and somewhat unmanageable task. On more than one occasion, we have missed discussions of interest simply due to lack of timely checking or inability to access the supporting materials quickly enough to give meaningful feedback. These missed opportunities are frustrating, both for us, and for the involved agencies, which are deprived of useful community input at the most germane stage of the process.

Oakland Privacy is an experienced advocacy entity and we have tried numerous methodologies to make sure all the bases are covered. These have included an automated Twitter bot to survey noticed agendas in search of keywords, and recurring notifications to members with agenda-checking reminders. For less experienced advocates, we expect the problems we experience with multi-jurisdictional advocacy are even more severe.

Allowing for interested parties to receive timely notifications upon request with sufficient details to be able to understand the full nature of the discussion would make it much easier to identify appropriate meetings for attendance and/or written input and to schedule community resources in a well-planned manner, rather than last minute fire drills.

We believe the more orderly release of information to directly interested parties will also be of benefit to municipal agencies, who will be able to field less day-of-the-meeting input, which often has the effect of causing postponements and delays due to the need to review and consider new feedback.

We would ask for your support for Senate Bill 274 as a civic engagement measure to make it easier for community members to participate in local government discussions in their areas of interest.

Sincerely,

Tracy Rosenberg

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